Fire in Jharia coal mines

1776. SHRI GAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to refer the answer to Starred Question 261 given in the Rajya Sabha on 15th March, 1993 and to state:

(a) whether the fire inside the coal mines of Jharia has not been controlled and is fast spreading over to other new coal area;

(b) if so, what are the latest techniques and methods adopted by Government to control this fire;

(c) the total loss of coal which turned into ashes due to this fire, as on date; and

(d) the details of safety measures taken to save the Jharia town?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Since nationalisation of the coal mines, concerted efforts have been made through implementation of various conventional fire fighting techniques for dealing with fires in Jharia Coalfield. These techniques include digging, trenching, blanketing, hydraulic sand flushing etc. Coal India Limited (CIL) has reported that as a result of the efforts made, further spread of six fires has been controlled.

(c) A precise estimate of coal reserves lost due to fire in Jharia Coalfield is difficult. However, it is estimated that about 37 million tonnes of coal might have been damaged in these fires.

(d) Due to implementation of various fire schemes, the danger to the safety of Jharia town has been reduced. With the obpective of finding a long-term solution to the problem of Jharia Coalfield fires, a detailed diagnostic study has been undertaken under the Jharia Mise Fire Control Technical Assistance Project for which World Bank assistance of US$ 12.99 million has been approved.

Education for coal workers' children

1777. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any provision for educating the children of coal workers in the wage negotiations held and agreed so far; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) The National Coal Wage Agreement-IV has the following provisions relating to educational facilities for coal workers:—

(i) About 100 school buildings will be constructed by the coal companies during the period of 4 years from the date of signing of NCWA-IV and the details of the same will be decided at the Company level in consultation with J.C.C.

(ii) The existing recurring grants to private committee managed schools in the coalfields will be enhanced so as to enable the schools to be run better including the payment of higher salaries to the teachers and expenditure on workers education.

(iii) Coal India will provide a grant of Rs. 2 crores per annum (excluding capital expenditure) for its subsidiary companies in addition to the amount granted in NCWA-III which will be administered by a companywise Joint Bipartite Committee. Where workers come forward with their own contribution for the running of educational institutions matching grants will be given by the coal companies.

Pay Scales of teachers of coal workers children

1778. SHRIMATH CHANDRA KALA PANDEY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any agreement between BCCL and any of the coal